

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE ACQUISITION FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Because of the diversity and complexities of electronic commerce (EC) technology, identifying the best solutions for improving government business processes or for converting from old legacy systems and procedures to new technologies may be difficult. The private sector is continuously developing new and innovative commercial off-the-shelf, plug and play and enterprise EC solutions for a wide range of business modernization problems, thereby making decision-making about alternative solutions challenging.

Since strategic EC planning is not a one-time event, Federal agencies face significant challenges in replacing legacy systems and reengineering business processes. Several factors influence the approach to strategic planning, the identification and analysis of alternative solutions, and the ultimate selection and implementation of a specific solution. In strategic EC planning, Federal agencies must consider such factors as the availability of funds for capital investments or continuing operational support, the availability of skilled personnel resources, legislative constraints, and the complexity and availability of relevant technologies. Federal agencies may choose EC solutions that are evolutionary and incremental rather than expansive and costly.

With the assistance of several EC managers from Federal agencies and the Fairfax Electronic Commerce Resource Center, the Office of Electronic Commerce developed the attached Electronic Commerce Acquisition Framework for Strategic Planning.

OBJECTIVE

The Electronic Commerce Acquisition Framework for Strategic Planning provides a tool addressing several key issues associated with the strategic planning process. This framework identifies the relationships among the following issues and other factors pertaining to Federal acquisitions:

- Major stages of the acquisition cycle
- Federal electronic commerce policy principles
- Federal building blocks for planning electronic commerce initiatives
- Current regulations and legislation applicable to Federal acquisitions
- Opportunities for improving Federal business processes through electronic
- Electronic commerce technologies and practices

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process involves alignment of organizational goals and objectives with established visions based upon defined mission statements. The strategic planning process will cut across a wide range of issues such as policies, regulations, business decision making, technology, economics, opportunities for improving business processes, and critical success factors. In response to guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, agencies have developed electronic commerce strategic plans based upon several key "building blocks" and "policy principles" that emphasize improved security of transactions, integration of Federal acquisition and financial processes, increased use of commercial solutions and services, and several others issues. In the future, as agencies revise and refine their strategic EC plans, they should consider these and other issues and their impact on short-term and long-term decision making regarding the employment of electronic commerce practices and technologies.

The attached planning framework has been developed to aid agencies in developing electronic commerce strategic plans, highlights these issues and provides a structured portrayal of their interrelationships. These interrelationships are keyed to the major stages of the acquisition cycle and are presented in a two-dimensional matrix format. The matrix consists of the following columns:

- Acquisition stage
- Current applicable acquisition regulations and legislation
- Electronic commerce issues and opportunities
- Building blocks for electronic commerce
- References to current Federal electronic commerce practices.

NEXT STEPS

The Office of Electronic Commerce is committed to assisting Federal agencies in their efforts to evaluate alternate EC solutions for modernizing business processes and in developing EC strategic and implementation plans. To execute this commitment, the Office of Electronic Commerce seeks one or more Federal agencies to volunteer to participate in testing the utility of the Electronic Commerce Acquisition Framework for Strategic Planning through practical pilot applications. If interested or have questions about the Framework, please call John Hart at 202-501-6733, or email him at john.hart@gsa.gov.